[Shri Yogendra Makwana]

Madam, the Government of India is ready to help the State Governments wherever there is need, whenever they make a request and wherever it is necessary. Thank you.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

III. Re. machinery for ensuring safeguards for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARI BAJPAI): Madam, the Constitution provides under Article 338 for appointing a Special Officer to investigate all matters relating to the safeguards provided under the Constitution for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The Government of India in 1978 had set up a Commission to do practically the same functions with the intention of replacing the Special Officer by such a Commission by amending the Constitution. However, the efforts of the Government at that time to amend the Constitution in this respect did not succeed. As a result the Commission and the Commissioner have been functioning with almost similar functions.

We have examine this matter carefully. Government does not propose to make any changes in the Constitution in this regard. Instead we would like to make the Constitutional machinery of Special Officer envisaged under Article 338 more effective and hence we shall strengthen his office and also provide for a disciplinary mechanism to take action against defaulting personnel.

We have need also of a body at the national level to aid and advise the Government in regard to the basic socio-economic issues involved in the process of uplift and welfare of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Changing situations demand that all the aspects should be carefully studied and suitable changes in policy and programme and in administrative structure and agencies effected to meet new requirements. It is hence proposed to rename the Commission for the Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes as the National Commission for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and redefine its functions and to expand it to include experts in relevant disciplines.

A detailed statement in this respect is placed on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

IV. Re. accidents to trains Hyderabad-Hazrat Nizamuddin Express near Manchiryal station of South Central Railway on 9-7-1987 and Barharwa-Rampurhat Passenger on 27-7-1987 on the Eastern Railway.

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): Madam, I deeply regret to apprise the House of two unfortunate accidents, one involving Train No. 21 Hyderabad-Hazrat Nidamuddin Express on 9-7-87 on the South Central Railway, and the other to Train No. 316 Barharwa-Rampur Hat Passenger on 27-7-87 on the Eastern Railway.

Train No. 21 Express left Manchiryal station on the Kazipet-Balharshah Section at 4.27 hours. It met with an accident at about 4.35 hours between Manchiryal and Mandamari stations after traversing a distance of about 3 Kms. It was marooned due to a flash flood caused by the bursting of an irrigation tank, following unprecedented heavy rains. Before it could proceed further, the surging flood washed away a portion of the railway embankment under the train, causing derailment of 14 out of the 18 coaches of the train. Of the derailed coaches, 10 were swept away by the force of water. Two of these coaches, fourth and fifth from the train engine, were swept to a distance of about 40m from the track.

About 20 minutes earlier, a goods train running towards Machiryal on the adjacent track had passed over the same stretch and nothing unusal had been reported by the driver of the goods train.

As per records, this section had no previous history of any damage by floods. The irrigation tank in question, located about 3 Km. on the upstream side of the railway track, was being maintained by the State Government.

As a result of the accident, 55 persons lost their lives and 2 sustained injuries, out of whom two had minor injuries. The casualties were mostly from the 4th and 5th coaches from the engine. These were Second Class Sleepers through co-